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THE WORD "KIDRON."

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The New Revision, in a marginal note opposite John XVIII., 1, gives, as the interpretation of the name Kidron, "of the cedars." I hardly dare to question the interpretation of such learned men, and yet I am perplexed by it. It is very true that *κέδρος* in Greek means "cedar tree," and of course *κέδρων* would mean "of the cedars." But then the question arises, Was Greek the language our Savior spoke? The words Talitha kumi, Ephphatha and L'ma Sabacthani would seem to indicate that, at least in ordinary intercourse, he spoke Aramean; so that the name of a place, or, as in this case, the glen of a winter torrent, would not be likely to be derived from a foreign language, but from the vernacular. Add to this the fact that here we have a word familiar to all Arabs, who speak, in the language of common conversation, of *Moi Kidder muddy* (or, as a Scotchman would say, *drumlie*) *water*; just as the opposite is *Moi Safie clear water*. In written Arabic it is مَادَارَ (Ma Kadara).

In the Hebrew, Gesenius gives קָדְרָן *to be turbid*, and, as כ and ק are often used interchangeably, קָדְרִין *The Turbid*, and says expressly, it is the proper name of the brook or torrent flowing in winter through the valley between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. A full description of it is given in Robinson's *Palestine*, I., pp. 396-402, 1st ed. On this last page he tells us that—

"It is nothing more than the dry bed of a wintry torrent, bearing marks of being occasionally swept over by a large volume of water. No stream flows here now except during the heavy rains of winter. Yet even in winter there is no constant flow, and our friends (missionaries), who had resided several years in the city, had never seen a stream running in the valley."

Of course such a stream, when it did flow, would be very *drumlie*, or, as the Arabs would say, *kidder*, and what name more fitting for such a נֶאֱחָל than the Hebrew form of it, Kidron,—not the wady of the cedars, but the wady of muddy, turbid water.

It may be said that Westcott and Hort's Revised Text of the Greek New Testament settles the question in favor of the rendering of the New Revision. But that is fairly open to question, on the following grounds:—

1. The MSS. on which that Revision rests for authority were not the original MSS. of the inspired writers, but copies made at many removes from the originals, and some of them as near to our own date as to that of the original writing.

2. These MSS. differ among themselves, and, in some passages, more recent transcripts seem to be more correct than older ones. Moreover, the selection

made between different readings is made on grounds not absolutely certain, but only probable, and in some cases the degree of probability is less than others.

3. Many transcribers of the New Testament have dealt less scrupulously with their MSS. than the Jews did with those of the Old Testament, and have ventured to alter and amend the text, sometimes bringing in a sentence from another place that seemed to guard the text from misconception, or make it plainer, and sometimes adding what in their estimation rounded out the narrative.

4. Many of these emendations had reference to names. Hebrew names were made to wear a Greek dress, e. g., *Elias* for *Elijah*, *Eliseus* for *Elisha*, and *Esaias* for *Isaiah*.

5. Many copyists were Greeks, without any knowledge of Hebrew; and nothing would be more likely than that they should change the Hebrew form of the proper name before us into the form which to them would be more intelligible.

6. Josephus began to decline the name in his writings,—κέδρων, —ος, —ω, —ον, etc.,—and so laid a foundation for the change in question. But,

7. The LXX. always give it as an indeclinable proper name, e. g.: *Ac.* τὸν *χ. κέδρων* (2 Sam. xv., 23; 2 Chron. xxix., 16; xxx., 14; 2 Kgs. xxiii., 6); *Dat.* τῷ *χ. κέδρων* (2 Kgs. xxiii., 6); *Gen. Pl.* ἐν τῷ *χ. τῶν κέδρων* (2 Sam. xv., 23; 1 Kgs. xv., 13). If this had been *κεδρώνων*, it would have favored the rendering of the New Revision; but as it is, it is only the same indeclinable proper name unchanged.

It may be asked, Why put it in the plural, as well as Genitive? The answer is much more likely to be, because the Heb. מֵי is never used in the singular. And so the Hebrew writer would naturally use τῶν in the Greek to express what we in English express by the singular, *muddy* or *turbid water*. This at least is much more probable than *cedar trees*, which, both in Hebrew and Aramean, are called *Arz* or *Erez*, Heb. אֲרֶז, Syriac or Aramean ܐܪܝܙܐ (*Arzo*).